

Columbia 'Career Planning' Is Breakthrough For Acts

Lundvall Outlines Marketing Philosophy

NEW YORK — Columbia Records is accomplishing with flying colors a primary marketing concept of "Career Planning" and making continuing LP sellers of as many acts as possible.

During the past year, the label has seen a number of performers gain a firm foothold on the LP market, an achievement that flies in the face of such barriers as tight playlists and decreasing venues for the live exposure of recording acts.

The basic approach in creating "market awareness," notes Bruce Lundvall, vp of marketing, is to treat each act "in a separate way." "There's no blanket formula, there's no proposition that we're going to create a campaign around a set number of acts. Each act gets its own kind of specialized concentration based on what the act is musically. The ideal vehicle to do it more quickly is a hit single, but then that doesn't guarantee that you've established an act. That can merely mean a hit single and some decent album sales; to get an act off the ground you have to look at how the album is selling and how it sells throughout the year."

FRONT COVER:



Dot, the only major exclusively country label, is exclusively proud of its recording artist, Donna Fargo. She was responsible for the label's certified million seller, "The Happiest Girl In The Whole U. S. A." She's since followed that up with more gold in "Funny Face," currently #9 on the Cash Box Top 100. She's achieved this pop success simultaneously with her country fame.

A native of Mt. Airy, North Carolina and a former homecoming queen and schoolteacher, Donna wrote both of her hits as well as eight of the songs on her top charting "Happiest Girl" LP. She's produced by Stan Silver and her material is published through Prima Donna Music.

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'Basic LP Audience'

Lundvall feels that most of the acts worked on during the past year have been launched to the degree that "we have taken the first steps toward launching their careers, and we've created an on-going interest in these artists." Lundvall says the company has achieved a "basic album audience" for these acts without relying completely on hit singles.

Lundvall is quick to point out that whatever the successful marketing pattern on any given number of acts, Columbia intends to continue to provide strong marketing support for them, and those acts, of course, who are now in the process of being launched.

A listing of Columbia's artist development over the past year includes newcomers and a goodly number of well-known names that have been "revitalized." Among the performers in both categories are: Dr. Hook, Loggins & Messina, Blue Oyster Cult, Chi Coltrane, Tanya Tucker, Mac Davis, The Mahavishnu Orchestra, the O'Jays, Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, West, Bruce & Lang, Billy Paul, Argent, the Hollies, Looking Glass, Johnny Nash, Albert Hammond, Charlie McCoy, Mott the Hoople, Liza Minnelli, David Bromberg.

In addition, Lundvall cites increasing LP impact by such acts as Eric Andersen and Ramsey Lewis. Some of the label's acts with "building momentum" are Earth, Wind & Fire, Loudon Wainwright III, Rowen Bros., (Cont'd on p. 18)

Asylum's 1st Year:

Success Is A Bed Of Roses

HOLLYWOOD — The only bedlam found around Asylum Records during the holidays is a bed of roses spelling out the label's success in its first 14 months of operation. To date Asylum has released eight albums of which Joni Mitchell's "For The Roses" is gold. David Geffen, president of the label, told Cash Box that he projects 16 to 18 LP releases in 1973.

Geffen began his career in New York as an usher for CBS where he landed a spot at William Morris and eventually branched out on his own. He is probably the self-starter of the century, with a good ear, a good amount of diplomacy, and of course some good luck. What he admits to is, "Lucky? Sure I've been lucky to be involved with incredibly talented people."

Artist Relationship

He believes that most record executives are not really music lovers outside the office. Geffen elaborated, "I don't think these people go home after work and listen to music for pleasure." He feels the result is that today's musicians are skeptical when it comes to the flattery given them by some executives in the industry.

Geffen also pointed out that often the artist doesn't know if the company really likes the material or is just handing out a line to secure a signature on a contract. He disclosed that his own company is based on the honest critique, supplied by people like himself, who do listen to music for pleasure and who really know and understand today's music. If he doesn't like an LP, he suggests to the artist what can be done to improve it. This evaluation sometimes involves telling an artist when he is ready to record: one act has waited two years on Geffen's advice before recording. Geffen seems to shine when it comes to estimating and controlling the budget of all Asylum albums.

Forthcoming record product will spotlight artists Jo Jo Gunne, Judee Sill, the Eagles, Linda Ronstadt (her first for this label), Jackson Browne,

Atlantic Cites '72 As Its Best Year; 22 Gold Records

Atlantic Records enjoyed its most prosperous year in 1972, according to Ahmet Ertegun, president. Sales of records and tapes reached a new peak and the firm earned a total of 22 gold records, one of the highest marks for Atlantic in any one year.

This successful year encompassed many noteworthy events. One of the most important was the distribution arrangement with RSO Records for the United States. RSO Records, the new Robert Stigwood label, has on its roster such major artists as the Bee Gees and Eric Clapton.

Another was the Rolling Stones Tour of the United States during the summer. The Stones played over 40 dates, covered more than 30 cities and grossed close to \$3 million on the tour. Their appearances received extensive press coverage, and helped make their two-LP album set "Exile On Main Street" a \$1,000,000 seller.

In 1972 Atlantic Records made its long-awaited entry into the field of country music. Jerry Wexler, Atlantic exec vice president, signed singer-song-writer Willie Nelson and Bobby Austin to the country division. In addition Atlantic opened up a Nashville office under the helm of Rich Sanjek.

Asylum Records, the new Atlantic label under the aegis of David Geffen and Elliot Roberts, in addition to releasing hit product with Joni Mitchell, Jackson Browne, Jo Jo Gunne, and The Eagles, put the original Byrds back together and by year's end had them recording a new album. The original Byrds' Asylum album is set for release in Jan. Joni Mitchell's first Asylum album, "For The Roses," earned an RIAA certified gold record

for sales over \$1 million within four weeks of release. Asylum also signed Linda Ronstadt and her first album for the label was set for release in 1973.

Other Key Events

Other important events during the year included Roberta Flack's two hits, the single "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" and the album "First Take." Both became number one recordings and helped make the performer one of the nation's top stars. In addition to receiving gold records for the single and LP, she also received gold records for her albums "Quiet Fire" and "Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway." Roberta & Donny also earned a gold record for their single "Where Is The Love." "Roberta Flack Day" was celebrated during the year in Washington, Boston, and Little Rock. At the end of the year Miss Flack was producing an album by Wayne Davis for release early in 1973.

Two soundtracks were released by Atlantic in 1972. "Good-bye Charleston Blue" contained an original soundtrack by Atlantic's own Donny Hathaway. The other original soundtrack was "The Hot Rock" from the successful movie starring Robert Redford.

Aretha Franklin continued her winning ways in 1972. She earned gold records for two albums, "Young, Gifted and Black," and the two-LP set "Amazing Grace," as well as for the single record of "Day Dreaming," which were produced by Jerry Wexler, and Atlantic vice presidents Tom Dowd and Arif Mardin. Aretha co-produced "Amazing Grace."

Donny Hathaway, in addition to the two gold record awards he shared (Cont'd on p. 10)

MIDEM '73 Sets Star-Studded Event Nights

NEW YORK—MIDEM '73, destined to be the biggest Bernard Chevry international music event yet in terms of attendance and exhibitors, has arranged a strong line-up of talent presentations during the convention in Cannes, Jan. 20-26.

The opening Gala (21) will feature Michel Legrand, Isaac Hayes, Bill Withers, Tony Christie, Udo Jurgens and Daliah Alvi.

The New International Artist Night (24) will star John Prine, Johnny Nash, Peter Skellern, Hurricane Smith and Demis Roussos.

At the Electric Band Night (25), featured will be Exuma, Malo, Commander Cody and Crazy Horse.

The closing Gala (26) will star Roberta Flack, Anne Murray and other key acts yet to be named.

The opening Gala and New International Night will also feature the orchestra of Frank Pourcel, while the orchestra of Caravelli will be featured at the closing Galas. Both Galas and the New International Artist Night will be held at the Palais de Festival, while Electric Band Night will be held outdoors.

U.S. exhibitors will be up more than 20% for the 1973 MIDEM. Last year, there were 61 U.S. exhibitors, while this year's event will have at least 80 U.S. exhibitors.

WGN's Harrison New RTNDA Pres.

CHICAGO — Charles Harrison, manager of News for WGN radio and television, recently was installed as president of the Radio Television News Directors Association at their annual banquet in Nassau. The convention drew more than 900 news people from the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Korea.